

MEMORANDUM

To: Don Chartock

From: Tim Payne

Date: August 1, 2008

Subject: Progress Report – JTC Special Needs Transportation Coordination Study

Don:

Neither Connie Soper, or I, are available to attend the ACCT meeting on August 8. I am providing this memo as a brief progress report on this study.

Transportation inventory: This portion of the project continues, but perhaps is illustrative of some of the issues encountered to date. Many agencies, state and local, provide transportation to special needs populations. It is rare, however, that different programs or types of agencies keep their information in the same form to make it readily comparable. For example, transit agencies report what could be considered the most traditional form of information about community-based transportation (boardings, service hours and miles, expenditures, etc.) but seldom is information available on the number of special needs individuals served. Conversely, data from the OSPI provides a very specific number of individuals served, but data about the actual number of trips, service hours and miles and total expenses is difficult, if not impossible, to find. This leaves the study with the interesting conundrum of finding common points of reference for comparison, or even understanding the total picture.

Facility Siting Case Studies: This task continues and should provide some fruitful areas of consideration in the final recommendations.

Coordination Best Practices: July 17 and 18, two workshops were conducted, one with stakeholders and one with the JTC Policy Group to review and discuss nationwide best practices in coordination activities and structures. It is safe to say

that no firm conclusions were reached as a result of the workshops, but a few themes are beginning to emerge in terms of possible recommendations.

1. Most attendees at the workshops felt that it is important for coordination activities to occur at the state agency level as well as the regional/local level. The Best Practices from other states seem to indicate that successful coordination happens most effectively at the regional/local level when supported at the state level.
2. How to establish local and/or regional groupings will continue to be a struggle for the state as a result of many various boundary-making efforts in different programs and agencies as well as the inter-action with SAFETEA-LU coordination requirements which use MPO's and RTPO's as the basis.
3. Stable Funding, even in small amounts, for planning, administration and even service facilitate better coordination.
4. Coordination, because it is about people, NOT the service, must occur within a broad spectrum of organizations and agencies whose mission(s) are trying to provide support and services to special needs populations that depend on community transportation for access.

There was a significant amount of material presented at the workshops so feedback was fairly high level. The study team is conducting follow-up efforts with all participants to gain further insight into how some of these practices can be strengthened or integrated into efforts in Washington State.

Overall, the study continues to progress with case studies currently being conducted and documented in four counties, Pierce, Snohomish, Yakima and Lincoln. As part of the case study process it was determined that each of these counties would be suited to the conduct of a community forum on transportation coordination. In May the first two were held in Everett and Yakima. On September 23 a forum will be conducted in Davenport at the Senior Center and on September 26, a forum will be conducted in Pierce County. Final details on both of these and an agenda will be forthcoming in the next week. This round of forums will act both as a way to engender reaction to finding and some alternative recommendations as well as to gain additional understanding of coordination activities and issues in each of the counties.

The study team will also be conducting a workshop for attendees at the Washington State Public Transportation Conference in Kennewick, September 7-10. The precise date and time has not been set for the workshop, as yet. The central purpose will be to use this as an opportunity to gain additional feedback from service funders and providers on emerging concepts and themes in the study.